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The Valley Star

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT MEDIA OUTLET OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

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American Division Championship Bowl:
10-0 Monarchs vs. 9-1 Southwestern Jaguars
Monarch Stadium, 6 p.m. Nov. 19

Monarchs play for perfect season

■ The Valley College Football team hopes to continue their winning streak in the American Division Championship Bowl on Saturday.

DALE BECK / CONTRIBUTOR

NICE CATCH - Philly native Ahkil Crumpton hauls in another pass on his way to helping the Monarchs defeat Santa Barbara City College, 47-35 on Nov. 12 in a game at Santa Barbara.

BY D. R. HARWARD
STAFF WRITER

The undefeated Valley Monarchs football team (10-0) will face the Southwestern Jaguars (9-1) in the American Division Championship Bowl on Saturday at 6 p.m. in Monarch Stadium.

The Monarchs secured their spot as a contender for the American Division title by defeating the Santa Barbara City College Vaqueros 47-35 and becoming the American Pacific League Champions.

Valley scored two touchdowns during the first half of the game, with quarterback Christian Jorgenson earning their first with a faket punt that became a 23-yard pass to Chris Phillips.

A few moments later, Donzale Roddie intercepted a pass from Southwestern quarterback Noah Holle, scoring a second touchdown for Valley with only 23 seconds left in the half- securing a 27-7 lead.

The Monarchs scored five touchdowns, the most impressive coming from a 86-yard kickoff return executed by wide receiver Ahkil Crumpton. The victory secured the Monarchs perfect mark.

Students march to Van Nuys City Hall in protest of Trump presidency

■ Dozens of students hold signs and voice their concerns about upcoming administation.

JOSEPH MARTINEZ/ CONTRIBUTOR

DISSENT CONTINUES - Students voice their discontent with the electoral college and President-Elect Donald Trump's rhetoric.

BY ARAM MARTIROSYAN
STAFF WRITER

Around 75 students gathered near the Student Union at 11 a.m., to start their march towards the Van Nuys City Hall to protest the racism and xenophobia, that they think the president-elect Donald Trump represents.

Jennifer Jaffi, a 37-year-old student at Valley and a participant of the protest, said that the primary goal of the protest is to "express solidarity with every marginalized group in our community."

Michael Martinez, 18, who participated in and helped spread the word around campus, said the objective of the event is to "show unity to our colored students and students from the LGBT community".

Racism, xenophobia, sexism and homophobia were some of the major themes of the march, with chants like "No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA!" "Black lives, they matter!" and "Say it loud, say it clear. Immigrants are welcome here!" reaffirming their stance on those issues.

The massive wave of anti-Trump walk-outs and protests were anticipated across over 80 colleges and universities nationwide, according to ABC7 online.

Wednesday's march was just one of the numerous

see *March* page 2

Blackboard fails to warn students in campus evacuation

■ Early-warning system Blackboard Connect does not make the grade in alerting students, faculty and staff.

BY SOLOMON SMITH AND HERBERT ORELLANA
STAFF

Blackboard Connect, Valley College's emergency notification system, recently failed to immediately alert students of a possible shooter on campus.

On Nov. 9, the campus was placed on lock-down around 7 p.m. after police received multiple 911 calls about an active shooter on campus. The Los Angeles Police Department arrived on the scene, setting up a unified command post at the corner of Fulton Avenue and Burbank Boulevard, off campus, in order to facilitate the evacuation. About 20 patrol cars, five firefighter trucks, a K-9 unit, and the Los Angeles SWAT arrived on scene. LAPD also provided a helicopter for air support and to assist in the search for the alleged shooter.

Blackboard's notification system proved unreliable. Valley President Erika Endrijonas said on the scene that "software issues prevented students to receive texts, voicemails and emails. They are definitely getting an email in the morning."

The night of the evacuation, Endrijonas sent out a campus-wide email about Blackboard.

"I am writing to let you know that I am quite aware that our BlackBoard Connect notification system did not function properly this evening," she said. "Jennifer Borucki sent out a lock-down message shortly after the incident occurred and the campus was being searched by law enforcement officers, but it took an inordinate amount of time for the messages to reach everyone. She then spent the next two hours on the phone with BlackBoard Connect staff trying to get the issue resolved. In the meantime, I received calls and texts from staff, faculty and administrators seeking information."

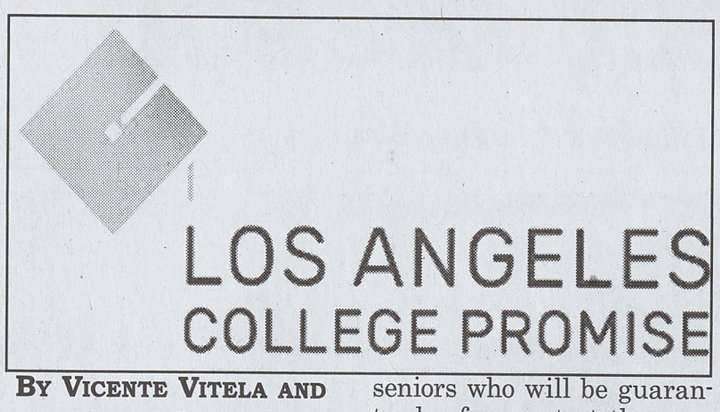
Of the multiple 911 calls, someone said there was

see *Evac* page 2

NEWS

College Promise secures seats for high school graduates

Public and private organizations come together to offer high school students free admission to colleges within the LACCD school system.



BY VICENTE VITELA AND JAMIE GARCIA
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Los Angeles College Promise will provide incoming college students with one year of free college tuition starting in the fall of 2017 to promote college enrollment.

The program is hoping to encourage high school students to enroll in college before and after graduation. A promise was made to seniors who will be guaranteed a free seat at the community college.

To qualify for the program, students must have graduated from a Los Angles Unified School District school and have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA). Once entered into the program, students must attend college full time and maintain a 2.0 GPA to receive the aid. For students planning on taking college courses in high school, dual enrollment will also be free.

Today, many students are discouraged in furthering their education after high school due to tuition costs and the rising cost of textbooks. This plan attempts to erase those barriers.

Los Angeles Community College District and Los Angeles Unified School District officials recently met with Mayor Eric Garcetti to discuss the details of the program. In addition to the free tuition, there is talk about paying for books and transportation.

Although there are other programs that offer similar benefits in Long Beach, this plan is unique considering that it will reach out to more than 900 LAUSD schools.

The largest school district in the state is working with the biggest community college district in the state to provide students with opportunities, with help from the College and Career Access Pathways Act which allows California community college districts to enter into formal partnership agreements with local school districts to expand enrollment opportunities for high school students.

"The main goal of this program is we want Los Angeles to be known as a city of graduates," said Erika Endrijonas, President of Valley College.

Garcetti said the mayor's office will pay $1.75 million of the $3 million program. The money comes from private funding that includes such names as The Los Angeles Dodgers, the Karsh family, and the Broad Foundation, while the LACCD will pay for the rest of the cost.

"We're preparing by having a number of back-up classes on standby," Endrijonas said. She added that the program will not cause any issues for current students.

When asked how this program will impact the graduation rates of high schools, John F Kennedy High School student Jose Olivas said "The graduation rates will be higher because it gives them a chance to start their career."

On the other hand, there are some high school students that are a bit less optimistic about the program and how the students will turn out.

"Some kids will take the program for granted and lack on their studies," said Andrew Olivas of John F Kennedy High School.A big question upcoming students want to know is if they have priority registration.

"As of right now the plan is for the students to gain priority registration and be amongst the second wave of registration openings," Endrijonas said when asked where the LA College Promise students will fall under the registration banner.

For many LAUSD school graduates the question being asked is why this program is being offered now and not in years past. Endrijonas said "I believe that this program is able to exist due to it being proven to be effective as well as all the national attention it has brought."

Over half of students fail to pay loans on time, some default

The rise in costs for colleges has caused a rise in the number of student loans in default.

BY ARAM MARTIROSYAN
STAFF WRITER

Since the first quarter of 2007 to 2014, the amount of federal student loans have increased tenfold, growing from around $100 billion to $ 1.1 trillion.

A Gallup Poll of 2015 showed that 70 percent of Americans consider post-secondary education to be "very important," with certain minorities putting a larger emphasis on it. And while it is true that there is a discrepancy of about 62 percent between median earnings of a four-year college graduate and a high school graduate, the decreasing salaries do not account for the burden of monthly student loan repayments that college graduates are forced to carry.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, as of July 2014, 51 percent of the borrowers are not repaying the loans on time and 18 percent have defaulted on their debts.

According to CollegeBoard, since 2001, there has been an increase of 94 percent in annual tuition for public four-year institutions (excluding room and board), and a 45 percent increase for private schools.

Economists point at analogous lending availability rates prior to the 2008 Great Recession, hinting that a similar scenario is certainly possible, if not inevitable.

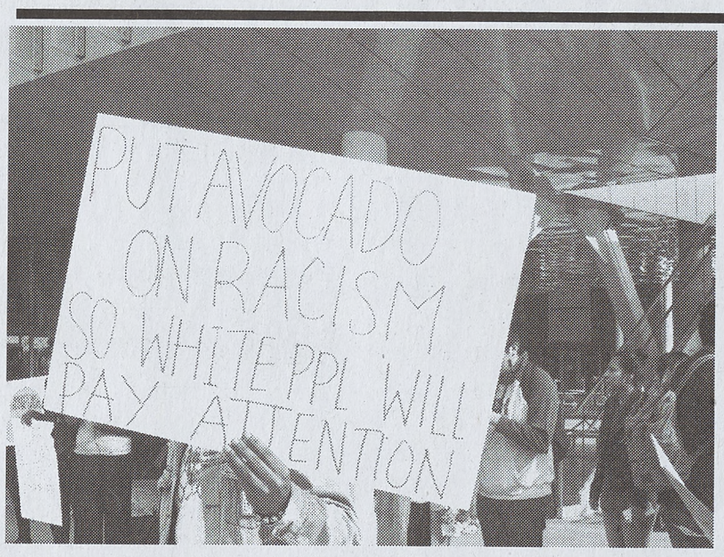
What is different between this scenario and the crash of 2008, is that the federal government is the lender for the overwhelming majority of student loans, unlike in 2008, where the owners of the toxic sub-prime mortgage packages were private companies purchasing them from Wall Street financial agencies.

The reason for such drastic change between federal and private lending rates is that after the private lending market collapsed, private companies could not perform any substantial trade of loan packages, regardless of the type of the loan, since their clients refused to purchase them, fearing that the student might default on their payments. This discouraged the private sector, as well as the general public from engaging in lending relationships, thereby leaving the federal government as the only reliable option.

Although the consequences of a default are much less severe in this case, a ruined credit and an ineligibility for any other student assistance programs could impact the livelihood of the recent graduate.

In essence, public institutions, incentivized by the availability of federal or private student loans and by the lack of federal funding, bring the student as a middleman to access federal funds via high-tuition costs. So instead of sufficiently supplying public universities and colleges with the necessary financial resources, the funds enter the school via the federal loan that the students have taken onto themselves. In the process, the financial independence of the graduate is at risk under the heavy burden of repayments and the great probability of default.

JUMPS



'Protests'

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demonstrations in academic institutions that included UCLA, CSUN, USC, CSU Fullerton, University of Virginia, Yale, Harvard, NYU and more.

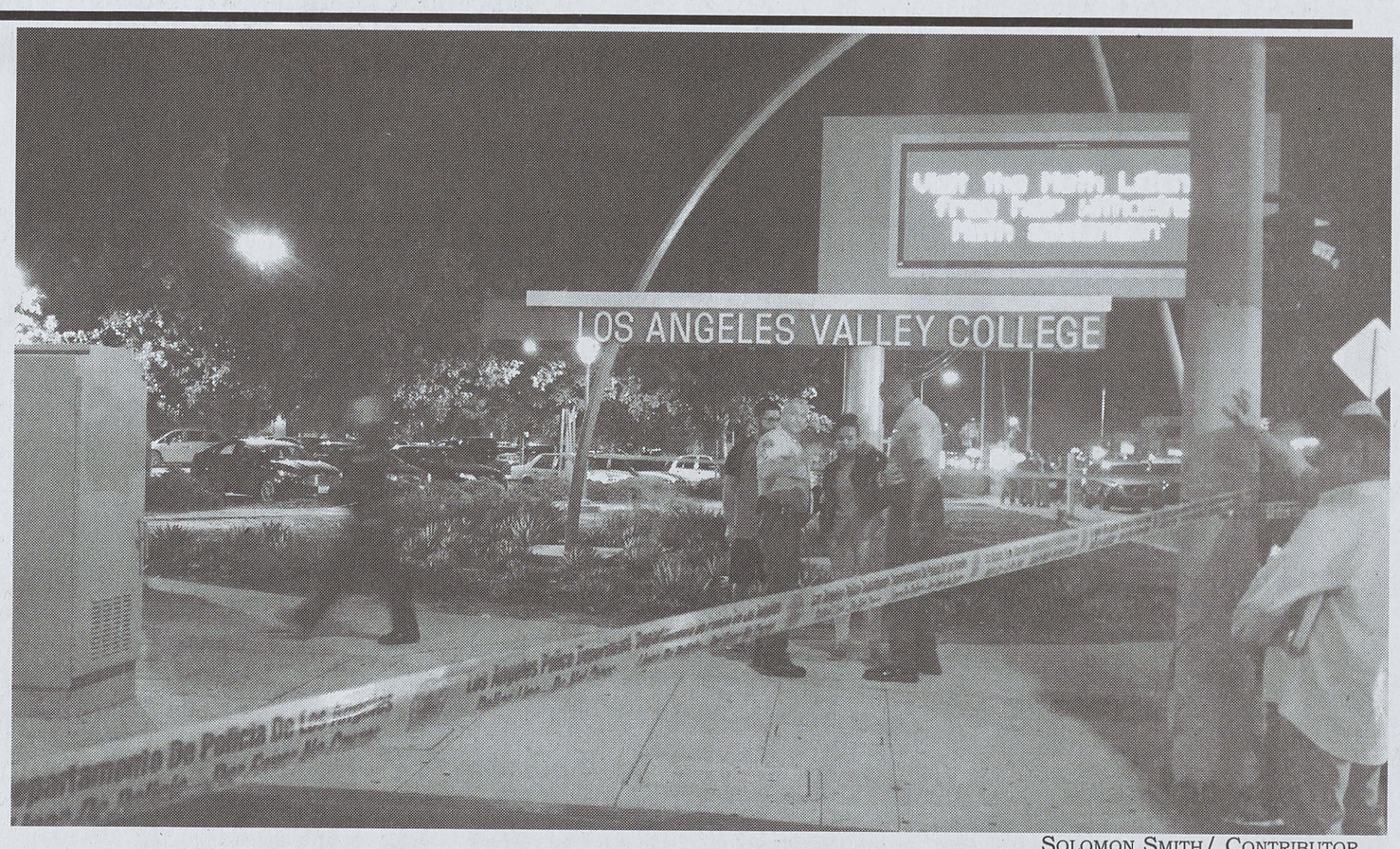
Rallies around the country started after election night, and spread across major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Miami.

In addition to racism, xenophobia and sexism, students are concerned that Trump said climate change is a hoax. One of the rally cries addressed this issue: "Trump denies climate science", and claimed that "it is shocking that someone so ignorant could be elected our president".

Denise Powers, a-58-year-old U.S. army veteran, was not part of the march but was near the cafeteria encouraging students.

"I love seeing young people getting involved", Denise says, although disappointed by the low turnout on election night.

Students chose to march to Van Nuys City Hall, 1.7 miles away, "To tell our community leaders what are our thoughts on the election," said Jennifer Jaffi.



SOLOMON SMITH/ CONTRIBUTOR

POLICE ON-SCENE- Students talk with officers during a campus-wide evacuation on Nov. 9.

'Evac'

continued from page 1

a hostage situation that was later discredited, according to police press officer Josh Rubenstein, who also confirmed that there was no evidence of shots fired. Endrijonas added in her email, "some students thought that they heard gun fire in Parking Lot A, but after searching the campus and interviewing witnesses, it turned out to be an older vehicle backfiring as it traveled down Fulton."

Valley's President Erika Endrijonas ultimately decided to close the campus upon her arrival to the command center in order to protect the safety of the students.

No evidence of a shooting or shooter was found, and there was video posted of a car backfiring on Fulton Avenue.

Even though it was a false alarm, students were not released from classes until 9:20 and thought for almost an hour that there was a shooter on campus.

"We got a message on the phone and someone walked into Monarch Hall saying there were shots fired," said student Mark Salcedo. "It was a little scary."

VALLEY LIFE

Netflix series The Get Down aims at the heart of hip-hop

The Get Down, a Netflix original, joins other binge-worthy Netflix offerings like Orange is the New Black and Stranger Things in excellence.

BY D.R. HARWARD
STAFF WRITER

The Get Down is a return to the early days of Hip-Hop, during the heyday of DJs--a time when rap was almost exclusively spit as a group and there were no rappers without deejays. At first glance, it is a tale about coming-of-age, discovering the promise of a life in music and the potentially high cost of pursuing it.

At its core, however, The Get Down is a love story- budding love between star-crossed youths as they stand together, and yet, stand alone upon the precipice of adulthood.

Much of what is great about The Get Down has to do with the "where" and "when" of this faux docu-drama that is focused on the lives of proto-rapper Eziekial Figuero aka Book (Justice Smith) and his school chum-turned-crush Mylene Cruz (Herizen F. Guardiola) a young choir singer with star potential and aspirations to leave the ghetto behind at any cost.

At a different level the story devolves into two distinct but intertwined tales; hers, with a strict and controlling former-convict-turned-reverend father and a doting uncle with shady connections and Book's with a well-meaning school teacher offering access to a top university and his friends with whom he has been accepted into the inner sanctum of the new 'wild style' block party culture.

Set in the broiling summer of '77 in the Bronx, the story is about the birth of Hip-Hop, as told--both actually and fictionally--by none other than Grandmaster Flash, of the group Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, one of the artists who created rap and street-style DJ-ing,

In fact, it was a member of the Furious Five, MC Cowboy, who is often credited with coining the term "Hip-Hop." Flash also serves as consultant and as an associate producer, duties that he shares with Kurtis Blow, another legendary figure from the early days of Hip Hop.

Baz Luhrmann (Moulin Rouge, The Great Gatsby remake) tells the story with a unique palate in which fantasy and reality are blended together in an almost seamless fashion. For example, the three fictional "DJ-Kings" in the Get Down, Grandmaster Flash, DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa are all so perfectly recreated by Luhrmann that there is a slight danger that events only taking place in the show will supplant actual history.

Luhrmann and his wife, co-producer, designer and Oscar winner Catherine Martin, have created an immersive set that is rich in color and detail but not overpowering or distracting. High production values are to be expected given the reportedly high cost of production- which, according to Variety, exceeded $120 million for the 12 episode series, making it "among the most expensive in history."

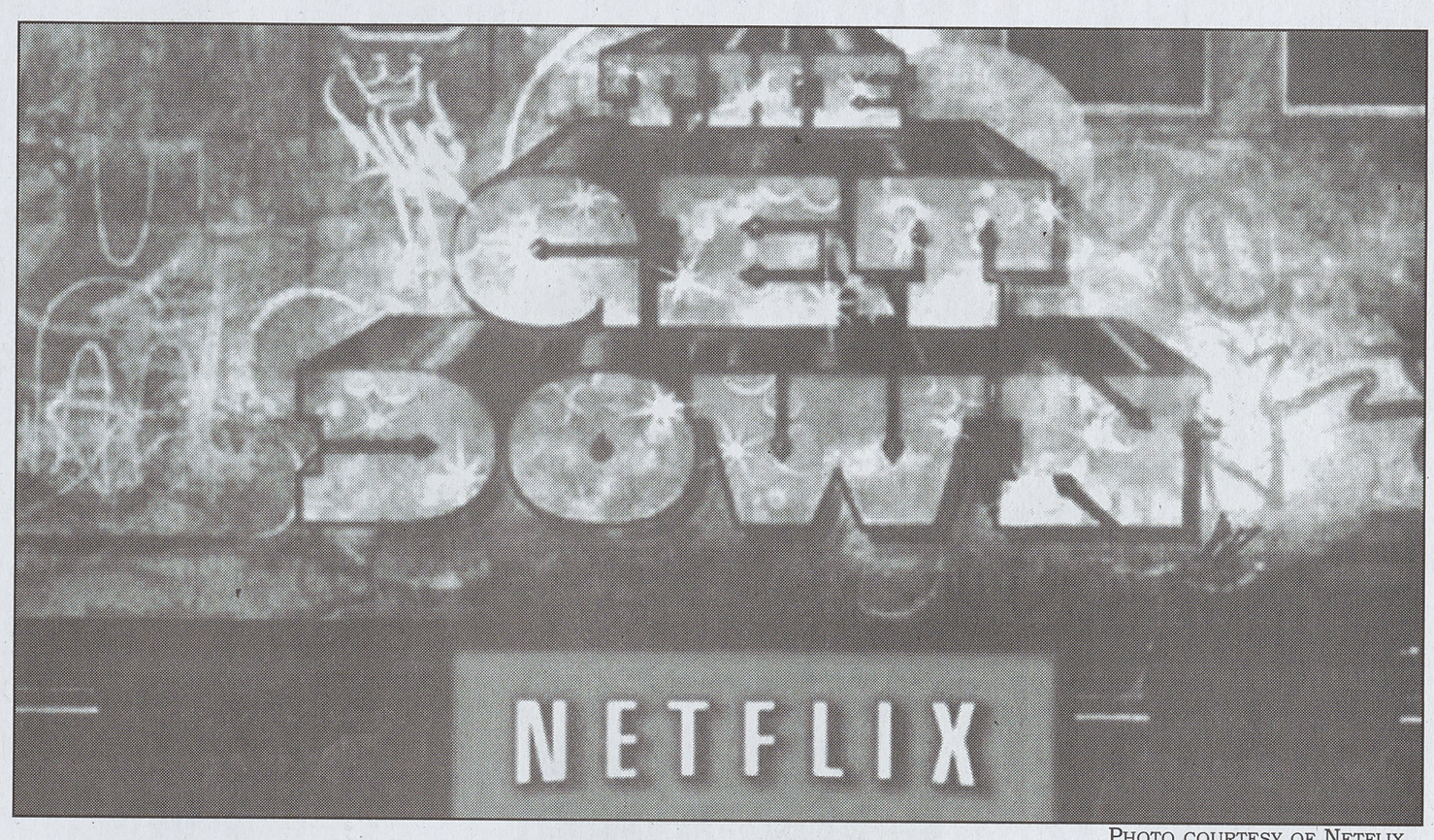


PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX

HIP HOP HISTORY-The Get Down is a Netflix original series set in the Bronx in 1977, combining fiction and history to examine the roots of Hip Hop.

Shameik Moore shines as Shaolin Fantastic, a nearly mythical graffiti artist who serves as the classic protagonist who innocently seeks to corrupt his just found 'best' friend, Book. However, Shaolin has other plans that involve his participation in criminal activities to finance his dream of becoming the next DJ king of the South Bronx.

The onscreen Grandmaster Flash is played by Mamoudou Athie, who portrays his character as the idol, role model and sensei to Shaolin; who together with his friends form the Furious Four plus One. According to the real Flash, Athie looked so much like his younger self that when he first met him he asked " "What's your mom's name?" and mentioned 'this dude looked just like me." Another Hip Hop heavyweight inextricably woven into this project is Nas, who is an executive producer, writes the original raps in the show and voices a character played by Daveed Diggs. Diggs portrays the grown-up Book who is in the midst of performing a concert at Madison Square Garden with a different song serving as rap-style narration of each episode and like Athie, Diggs looks strikingly similar to Nas.

The show's creator, Luhrmann, reportedly spent more than 10 years working on this project, which was in production for almost three years.

Releasing The Get Down, Netflix broke from its tradition of releasing the entire season at once, here they released the first six episodes with the remaining six scheduled for next year.

Overall, The Get Down is an amazing production of a fascinating tale, featuring talented actors and a gifted production staff. Five out of Five stars. See it.

Gears 4: a worthy addition

Gears of War 4 continues spotless gameplay under new developers.

BY OLIVER ASTON
STAFF WRITER

Gears of War 4 is an incredible balancing act, and at first glance it would be hard to guess that the title was not crafted by the original developers, Epic Games. But as the campaign progresses and things begin to go bump in the night, new developer, The Coalition, shows its teeth and delivers a polished experience- albeit a safe one.

Taking place 25 years after the third game, the game picks up with James Dominic "JD" Fenix, a somewhat cocky newcomer who happens to be the son of series veteran Marcus Fenix. JD, along with childhood best friend Del, and a young soldier named Cait, have been living outside the militaristic government's controlled cities for some time and set out to loot one of these establishments for supplies. After some initial conflict the action really heats up during the second chapter--Cait's mother is abducted by a frightening new enemy called The Swarm and JD is forced to call upon a grizzled war veteran for help. In the following acts Gears 4 reintroduces JD's father Marcus and drops set-piece after set-piece at an unrelenting pace as a desperate motorcycle chase gives way to miles of underground tunnels filled to the brim with ominous red pods, all leading up to an excellent twist ending.

Gameplay in Gears 4 doesn't miss a beat. Pop and shoot mechanics developed in the 2006 original are alive and well but have been refined for this outing. If there is one problem with the game it is that multiplayer feels a little stagnant. It is not any less explosive than previous entries, it just brings nothing new to the table. Players still find matches dominated by shotguns and explosive torque bows, though new weapons do add some flare to the proceedings. Horde mode returns too, and adds classes to the familiar 50 wave onslaught- good clean fun that remains the most satisfying way to enjoy the series.

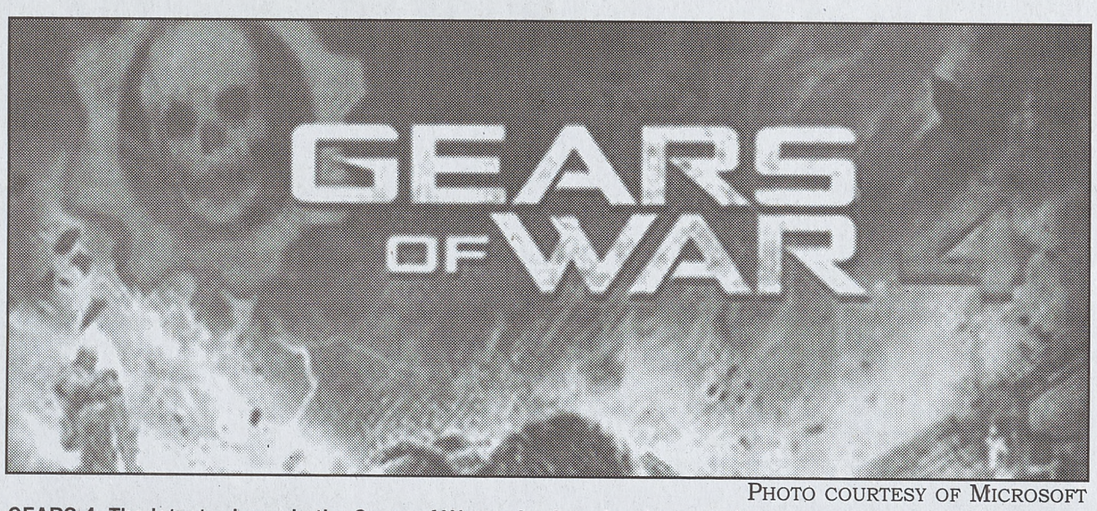


PHOTO COURTESY OF MICROSOFT

GEARS 4- The latest release in the Gears of War series is a visual tour de force with an excellent twist ending.

Do not try to play it offline, however, because for some puzzling reason it's restricted to dedicated severs.

As per usual, Gears is a visual tour de force, especially, on PC where the best of rigs can enjoy the game in crisp 4K resolution, though the Xbox One version is a showcase in and of itself; advanced lighting techniques, rain that elegantly trickles down the character's armor, and a smooth frame rate. The soundtrack composed by Ramin Djawadi of Game of Thrones fame, fits right in to the existing mold and makes for a great icing on the cake.

Though it stumbles in a few areas, Gears 4 is a great addition to the series, making it a fantastic purchase for fans and newcomers alike.

*Disclaimer- Oliver Aston works for Microsoft, the opinions herein are his own and do not necessarily reflect that of Microsoft or its employees**

The Secret Things make their sexy, loud, rock'n'roll debut EP

PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVEOIL RECORDS

NEW MUSIC- Cynthia Catania, Steve Giles, and Dan Nelles of The Secret Things. Their debut EP "Shock Diary" was released Oct. 27, 2016.

Newly-released "Shock Diary" is the debut EP by Los Angeles-based rock band The Secret Things.

BY COURTNEY MELOCHE
STAFF WRITER

Born at the beginning of 2016, Los Angeles' three-piece The Secret Things describe themselves in their bio as "sexy, loud rock'n'roll."

Vocalist/Guitarist/Producer Cynthia Catania and bassist Steve Giles had previously performed together in popular local band Saucy Monky. Longtime friends Giles and drummer Dan Nelles had worked together in a number of projects. Early in 2016, the three came together, and they made their live debut at the Temecula Balloon and Wine Festival in May. They gave away copies of their demo to attendees of their debut Los Angeles show at Boardner's in August, and Oct. 27 marked the release of their debut EP "Shock Diary."

Their sound, which features guitar feedback, distinctive basslines and hard-hitting drums behind Catania's sultry vocal, is, indeed, sexy, loud rock'n'roll. Kicking off with the riff-driven first single "All The Way Down," the song features a hooky chorus you will want to sing along with at the top of your lungs. "Poly Girl," the second track, kicks off with just the right dose of feedback and a tasty drum fill by Nelles before Catania's distinctive croon comes in to tell us a story about polyamory.

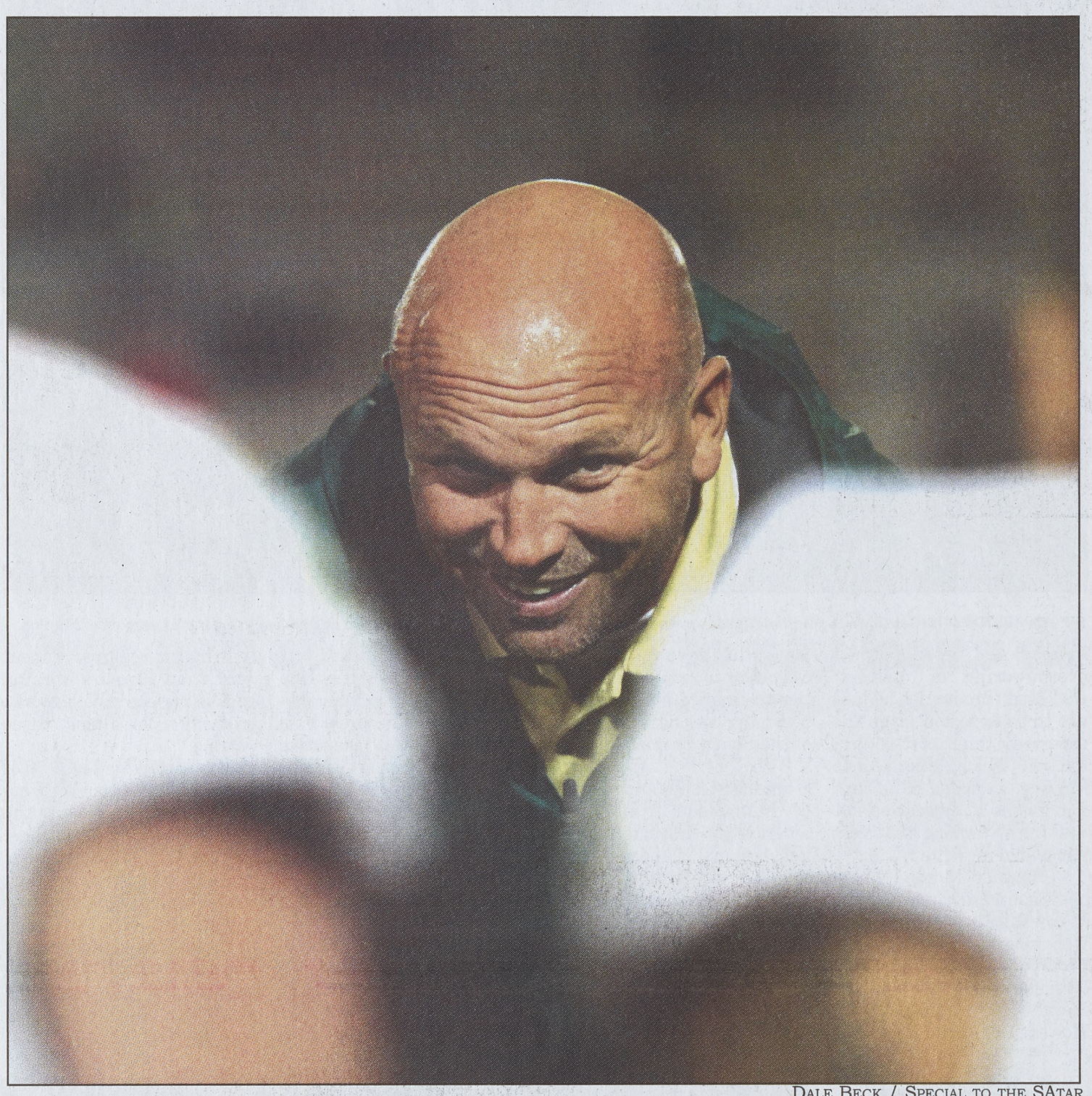
"Lana," the third track, is a mid-tempo ballad that is a lovely showcase for Catania's smooth, stunning voice. The sparse guitar in the verses that builds in the chorus and beyond is a nice departure from the first two tracks.

Track four, "Hot Mess," starts out with a quick string bit before returning to the mood of the first two tracks. Describing a girl on the brink, Catania sings "I'm free falling—one hot mess, it's an SOS, yeah. Always something—more or less, it's an SOS, yeah." It will be stuck in your head for days.

The set closes with "Paradise Gone," a rocking ballad. The heavy guitars combined with Catania's "paradise gone, paradise gone" before crashing into the chorus, create a sense of urgency. Perhaps the best of the collection, "Paradise Gone" takes you on a visceral, emotional journey.

It may be their first offering, but Catania, Giles, and Nelles are veterans of the Los Angeles music scene, and it shows. Beautifully crafted from beginning to end, this is a must-hear EP.

Tucker gets team to second bowl



DALE BECK / SPECIAL TO THE SATAR

WINNING SMILE- Head Coach Robert Tucker speaks to his team during a recent game as the Monarchs are enjoying a perfect season.

THE VALLEY COLLEGE FOOTBALL PROGRAM WRAPPED UP ITS SEASON WITH A PERFECT RECORD OF 10 WINS AND 0 LOSSES--WITH ONE FINAL GAME TO WIN TO CLINCH THEIR CROWNS AS THE KINGS OF THE 2016 WESTERN STATE CONFERENCE. HEAD FOOTBALL COACH ROBERT TUCKER SPOKE TO THE VALLEY STAR ABOUT THE SACRIFICES THAT ARE THE BASIS OF HIS STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS- BOTH ON THE GRIDIRON AND BEYOND.

BY D. R. HARWARD
STAFF WRITER

Tucker has coached the Monarchs for less than two years, but in that time, he has facilitated two championship bowl appearances and quietly reinvigorated the football program.

Tuckers' tough-as-nails appearance and natural confidence belies his modesty and compassionate nature, that together with a focus on life lessons and on "how to be first class people" resonates deeply with his students and encourages them to achieve a level of success that would have been considered to be nearly impossible just three short years ago.

Prior to coming to Valley, Tucker was the head coach at West Hills College in Coalinga, where, in his first year, he transformed a team with a 2-8 record into becoming the Northern California Conference co-champions (with the best record in the school's history, 10-1). He jumped on the opportunity to come to Valley because of the new facilities and because he has family nearby.

He was, and continues to be, excited by the opportunity to work closely with Athletic Director Jim Fenwick (another legendary Valley football coach and Hall of Fame inductee) whom he considers a mentor. His football experience is extensive and includes a stint as the head coach of the Molosses D'Asnieres (American Football) club in France and was involved with the French National American football team in 2011.

Tucker: "The program focuses on more than just football; it is about how to deal with adversity, how to overcome adverse situations and how to be positive. In our program, there is a high level of accountability, everything is based on improvement, about getting better and the guys know they are not there."

Valley Star: With a perfect 10-0 record, the team is still not there?

Tucker: "When you focus on the details; when you focus on going to study hall, on getting to meetings early, when you focus on being a good person--we do things like picking up trash during meetings and at other facilities. We participate in activities on campus, like we sent everyone to the recent bone marrow donor drive.

We try to get them to do a lot of things together...their job is to love each other, our coaches' job is to love them; we try to get them to learn how to love their teammates and learning how to love the people around them and love their school--I think all those things are important. All of those things help them to win on the field and also help them in their academic life, help them in their personal life--I believe what they learn in this program will help them be a stronger person. I want them to maximize their potential as a person."

Valley Star: That doesn't sound much like your typical college football program.

Tucker: "No, it is very unique. It is unique because, yes, I am happy that we are 10-0, and have earned another bowl game--absolutely I am happy--but I am just as happy when my guys come back and show me their tests or their quizzes that they just got an A on- that is just as important."

Men's water polo three time champs

■ **Men's Water Polo team bounces back to win its third consecutive Western State Conference Championship after a slow start.**

BY KATHLEEN ZAMORA
STAFF WRITER

After starting off on a losing streak, Valley College's Men's Water Polo team has won the college championship three years straight.

Valley College's Men's Water Polo team had a rough start this season, with one win and four losses. They continued to struggle through on their next game, but unfortunately lost on a score of two to three. The team might have lost their first few games, but, with moral support from their coach, they stuck together.

Head Coach Jim McMillan, who has been working at Valley for over thirty years, says that the team's turn out is remarkable. McMillan says the team started off as a four seed into the tournament and then played one seed (favorite) against Cuesta College; Valley won nine to eight. He says it's a great deal to start off small, work hard and finally achieve your goal.

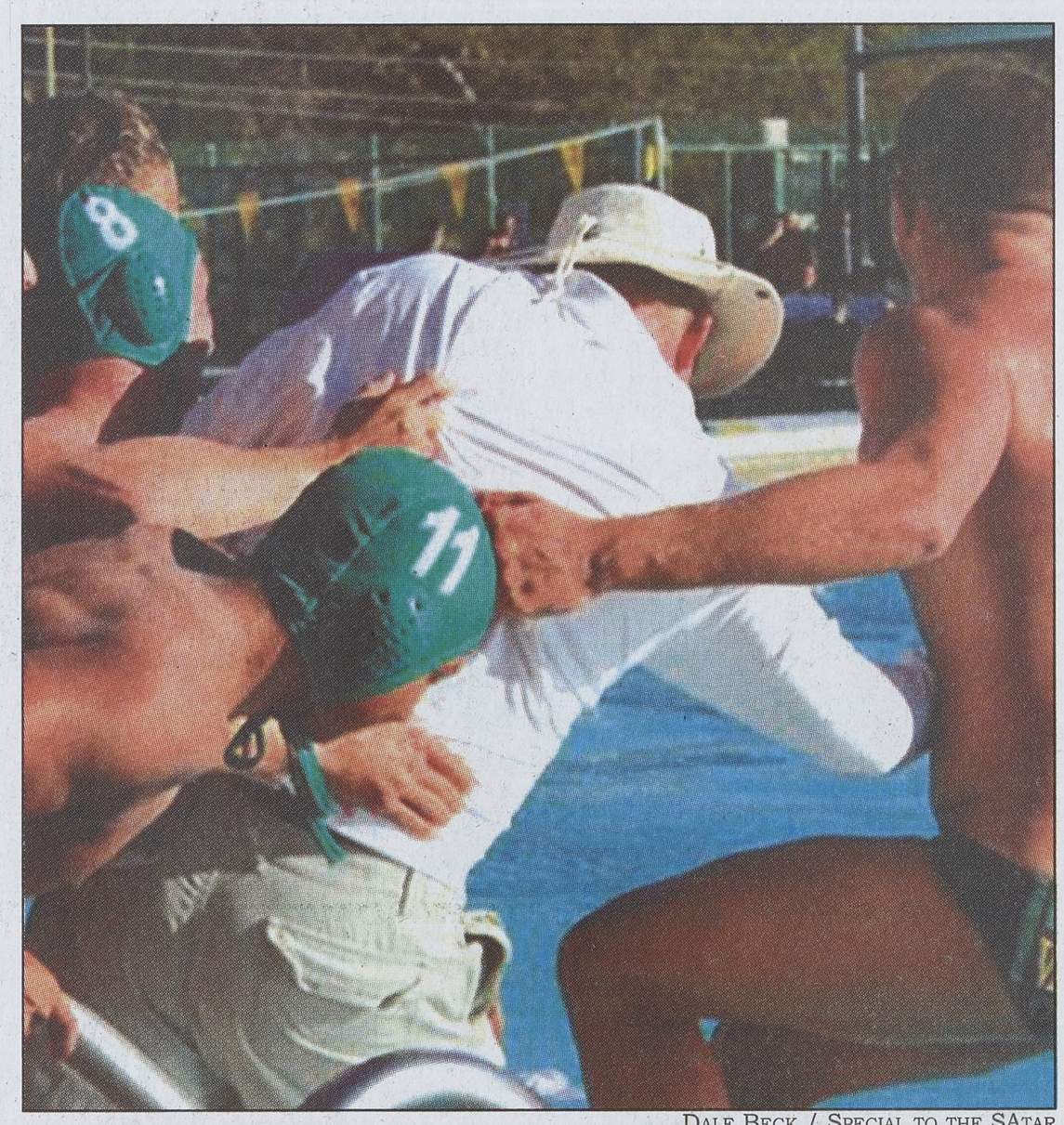
"Good things happen when you believe, and work hard."

Head Coach Jim McMillan

"All season long the boys have been working hard but we kept losing on one to three goals," Coach McMillan said. "But I had a feeling if we were to train hard the balls would start to go in the cage. Just believe. Good things happen when you believe and work hard."

When you're interested in sports, you're interested in the players. The players make the team, the team makes the game and the game reflects our school. Coach McMillan says that the team doesn't have one good player, it has thirteen boys that believe in the program and each other. He says being on a team is very special and a wonderful experience.

"A team brings people from different places together and makes them as one," he said. "I have no one superstar player. They worked hard and became one, that's the definition of a team. I have thirteen superstars and they have Valley pride."



DALE BECK / SPECIAL TO THE SATAR

TEAM TRADITION - Players push coach Jim McMillan into the pool after another championship season.